

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection, and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested in light of the amendments and remarks made herein. Claims 8-9 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 1, 8, 13 and 17 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto (U.S. Patent No. 6,831,705 B2) in view of Kenny et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,009,129). Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto in view of Kenny et al. and further in view of Hutchison IV et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,722,061). Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto in view of Kenny et al. and further in view of Albicker (U.S. Patent No. 7,274,918 B1). Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto in view of Kenny et al. and further in view of Schreiber et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,010,405).

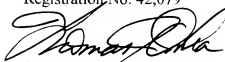
Applicants greatly appreciate the Examiner's indication that claim 6 is allowed and claims 9-12 would allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response independent claims 1 and 17 have been amended to recite the limitations of claim 9. Accordingly, applicants submit that all independent claims are allowable and removal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

With regard to claims 2-3 and 10-14 these claims depend from independent claim 1 discussed above, which has been shown to be allowable in view of the cited references. Accordingly, each of claims 2-3 and 10-14 are also allowable by virtue of its dependence from an allowable base claim.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all the present claims are patentable in view of the cited references. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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